



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**AFGHANISTAN**

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

April 1-April 15, 2010

### AGRICULTURE

**USAID Brings Hope to Marja:** Only a month after the end of Operation Moshtarak, newly appointed Marja District Governor Hajji Zaher has already held the first in a series of meetings with local elders on USAID's Afghanistan Vouchers for Increased Production in Agriculture (AVIPA) Plus program to explain the benefits and responsibilities that come with it. At the first meeting, the District Governor gave the elders the good news that USAID will soon deliver 4,000 mobile water pumps. The pumps will help farmers irrigate their fields using water from existing canals. Additionally, USAID will distribute agricultural machinery to the district and will organize cash-for-work canal cleaning activities to provide licit employment opportunities.



The District Governor of Marja calls on elders to participate in AVIPA's voucher distribution program.

PHOTO: IRD/AVIPA Plus

The first meeting set a precedent for future cooperation by encouraging community participation and government guidance – the base on which AVIPA's interventions in agriculture rest. The program promotes cooperation between farmers and government representatives, using agriculture to stabilize conflict-ridden areas of Afghanistan.

The effort is already bearing fruit. "We are happy with the government. We need these pumps to increase irrigation capacity. The District Governor is asking us to take responsibility for this process," said one of the elders. Another elder commented, "Providing employment, seed, and fertilizer is the right way to start."



Local leaders applaud winter maintenance of the Bamyan-Dushi Road at a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new District Governor's Office Building in Bamyan's Shibar District.

PHOTO: USAID/IRP

### INFRASTRUCTURE

#### **Winter Road Maintenance Keeps Traffic Flowing:**

In many areas of Afghanistan, the roads in winter are almost impassable. On April 6, Afghan leaders in Bamyan applauded the USAID-sponsored winter maintenance program that kept the road from Bamyan to Dushi open and cut travel time between the cities by six hours.

A local Afghan firm performed snow removal and grading work to smooth the rough, bumpy road during the winter months. In addition, the program added 14 additional kilometers at the request of the provincial government, allowing easier entry into Bamyan City.



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**AFGHANISTAN**

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

April 1-April 15, 2010

The maintenance prevented further erosion and helped to set the stage for the redesign and reconstruction of the 164-kilometer road in the coming year.

Gifts, anthems, and speeches indicated the warm feelings of the local population toward the improvements to their region. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the Governor of Bamyan made clear that such projects will bring changes. "This important project will boost economic activities as well as help the people who live along the road," Governor Habiba Sarabi said. "I would like to thank all donors and companies who responded to our request."



Delegates tour Tata BP Solar India Limited's solar water heater production facility in Bangalore.

PHOTO: USAID/SARI

### **Women Work for Clean Energy Access in**

**Afghanistan:** The newly launched Women's Institute for Sustainable Energy Research (WISER) commenced operations by hosting a nine-day capacity building program for 18 female delegates from Afghanistan. The participants included solar engineers, government employees, teachers, community leaders, social activists, and recent graduates. They benefited from a mix of classroom training and hands-on skills training about renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies, financing mechanisms for clean energy, and gender considerations in energy policy development.

The USAID-funded program brought the women to India, where they observed how another country in the region provides clean energy access. In Kerala, the delegates conducted site visits of commercial facilities that employ renewable energy and energy efficiency measures, attended demonstrations of village-level energy technologies, and observed a rural women's energy clinic. In Bangalore, they participated in a two-day session hosted by Tata BP Solar that addressed design considerations and distribution mechanisms for solar photovoltaic and solar thermal systems. The delegates also visited the Solar Electric Light Company to learn about its market-based approaches for solar energy.

As a result of the program, the Afghan delegates committed to forming a chapter of WISER to institutionalize their efforts. Their roadmap for increasing clean energy access in Afghanistan emphasizes working in rural areas to deploy household-level clean energy technologies such as improved cook stoves, solar lighting, and water heating systems. To better serve the urban areas they suggested developing hydropower projects to increase electric generation capacity. They also emphasized the need for gender mainstreaming in energy policies and sector applications.



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**AFGHANISTAN**

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

April 1-April 15, 2010

### **Engineering Interns Graduate with Practical Skills:**

In early April, 23 engineering students from Afghan universities graduated from a USAID-sponsored internship program on road construction and maintenance. The hands-on program allows students to participate in laboratory and field work, better preparing them for their future careers. Ninety-one students have graduated from the program since its inception in 2007, and construction firms now employ many of the program alumni.

The internship program provides instruction in materials testing and quality assurance. Students conduct tests on natural rock and soil found in road beds, and they evaluate the quality of asphalt used by contractors in road construction. It is important for engineers to understand how the environment affects different materials as well as the safety and durability of the road. Some roads, for example, must bear the weight of many trucks while other roads experience lighter traffic.

"When we came as trainees, we were so happy to work with the lab staff and supervisors," said one of the graduates. "Now, we can do all of the physical testing of soils and materials, and we can go to the sites to do quality assurance."



Students attend their engineering internship graduation ceremony.

PHOTO: USAID/AIRP



VTC instructors inspect the new engineering text books provided by USAID.

PHOTO: USAID/AEAI

### **New Technical Reference Books for MEW's Vocational Training Center:**

The Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW) established the Vocational Training Center (VTC) in 1976 to prepare technically inclined Afghan students to enter the energy sector workforce. While past conflicts in Afghanistan have limited the development of VTC, the U.S. Government started providing development support in 2006.

On April 5, USAID provided the VTC library with 334 new technical reference books and English dictionaries. The new additions to the library included

beginner electrical engineering and mathematical text books, in addition to the English dictionaries. The selection of books was closely coordinated with the VTC instructors in an effort to provide books required for the start of the school year. VTC Director Engineer Tajenesa Besmil thanked USAID for its continued support, saying, "I hope that such kind of cooperation will continue in the future." The instructors noted that the new books would help them prepare better class lectures by providing up-to-date technical information.





**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**AFGHANISTAN**

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

April 1-April 15, 2010

### STABILIZATION

**Vocational Training Launched in Ghazni:** High unemployment is a major destabilizing factor in Ghazni Province, where many people lack the education and skills they need to escape a lifetime of subsistence farming. To address this, USAID's stabilization program, the Local Governance and Community (LGCD) project, coordinated with provincial and district government officials and community leaders to develop a portfolio of vocational skills workshops.

On March 29, an opening ceremony for three of these training programs in the provincial capital revealed strong government and community support for the training workshops. District officials and district development council members representing all the planned training locations attended, along with Assistant Director of the Department of Labor and Social Affairs Nasurullah Siasi, who spoke about the importance of encouraging youth to reject violence and learn a vocation in order to build their country. LGCD works in some of Afghanistan's most volatile provinces to promote links between Afghan citizens and their government.



Stakeholders in Ghazni attend the vocational training program launch.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD



The third class of Afghan Master's in Education students.

PHOTO: USAID/HEP

### EDUCATION

**New Class of Future Afghan Education Leaders Enter Master's Program:**

The third group of students in the Afghan Master's of Education program began classes at Kabul Education University on March 23. The 22 participants, half of whom are female, are education professors from universities in Kabul, Baghlan, Faryab, Jawzjan, Kandahar, Paktya, Parwan, and Samangan provinces. The program improves the teaching skills of professors through training in pedagogy, subject knowledge, and professional attitudes.

The participants educate future secondary school teachers at Afghan universities. Their advanced education experience will have a cascading effect on future secondary teachers as they watch how their professors' teaching styles improve and incorporate new methods into their own teaching practice.

Ahmed Shuaib Moslemyar, one of the participants in the third class, said that the course will "teach me about the importance of globalization in education and how Afghanistan can play



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

April 1-April 15, 2010

a part in that.” He is very enthusiastic about the degree opportunity and smiled as he said, “For a long time I wanted to...[earn]...a Master’s degree and now I am like a thirsty man in front of a big pond.”

### **Designing Afghanistan’s First Master’s in Public Health Degree:**

Afghanistan has very few Master’s in Public Health (MPH)-educated professionals and requires educated personnel to improve the country’s poor health outcomes, such as high child and maternal mortality rates. To address this need, USAID is supporting the development of an MPH program at Kabul Medical University (KMU) – the first graduate degree program to be offered at KMU. The program expects to draw students from Kabul, Hirat, Kandahar, Kapisa, Khost, and Nangarhar provinces.

A task force meets every two weeks to discuss and design the MPH so that future graduates can better address the public health care needs of the Afghan people. The task force includes members from USAID, the Ministry of Public Health, the donor community, non-governmental organizations, and Kabul Institute of Health. Ultimately, the task force will develop a viable, sustainable curriculum tailored to the Afghan context.



This USAID-supported task force is designing a Master’s in Public Health program at Kabul Medical University.

PHOTO: USAID/HEP